

**THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
OF ELLSWORTH, MAINE
FOUNDED 1812**



January 2024 THE STEEPLE NEWSLETTER

First Congregational Church, PO Box 12, 2 Church Street, Ellsworth, Maine 04605 207-667-8321 ellsworthucc.org

From Rev. Keith Bowie, Transitional Minister

Hope Peace Joy Love . . . Light of Christ!

A blessed New Year to you all! We begin 2024 encouraged by a wonderful turnout for our Christmas Eve service. About sixty plus souls gathered to herald the joyous arrival of the Christ child. We sang familiar carols as well as listened to upbeat Christmas music led by Laura & David McIntyre, the guest musicians for the service. Truly, Jesus lives and reigns! I pray that each of you has felt God's presence stir in your hearts and your lives this Christmas. I pray that hope has been rekindled, peace restored, joy shared, and love reborn within you. And I am profoundly grateful for your prayers of loving kindness, for your tremendous devotion and enthusiasm, and for generous gifts of your time during this Advent and Christmas season. It is a wonderful and encouraging new starting point as we continue to seek God's leading us in new paths of service in church and community.

I cherish the joys of Christmas and of the Incarnation, the delight of working alongside you, and being in ministry with you. I look forward to the many ways that the light of Christ will shine upon us and through us as we turn our calendars and bring in this coming New Year. It was said of a redeemed Mr. Scrooge (Charlies Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*), *"that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge."* May that be truly said of us as well! May the New Year bring many blessings to you and your loved ones!

That in all things God may be glorified,

Keith

MASKING is OPTIONAL
in the church building.



Please maintain physical distance and respect the space of those who wish to continue to wear a mask.

JANUARY CHURCH MEETINGS

- Adult Forum** – Sundays, 8:15 a.m.
Choir – Thursdays, 6 p.m.
Busy Bodies – **Reconvene Jan 22**, 10:30 a.m.
Music – TBA
Search Comm – TBA
Deacons – Sunday, Jan 14, 11:30 a.m.
Christian Ed – Sunday, Jan 14, 11:30 a.m.
Trustees – Thursday, Jan 18, 7 p.m.
Missions – Sunday, Jan 21, 11:30 a.m.
Council – Monday Jan 22, 6 :30 p.m.

ANNUAL MEETING

– Sunday, Jan 28, 11 a.m.

Our meetings are hybrid, in person AND Zoom, so that you may participate in the way you are comfortable. All FCC Zoom events (meetings and worship) use the same meeting number and password. Please contact the secretary in the church office (T-W-Th) for Zoom instructions.



Sunday, January 28, 2024

According to Article 13 of the church By-Laws, Annual Meeting is held after morning worship on the fourth Sunday of January. We will hear reports from Officers and Committees, elect Officers, consider a 2024 Budget, and transact any other necessary business. Following the meeting there will be a light lunch provided.

If you chair a committee, please submit your year-end report on 2023 activities to Joyce in the church office before Tuesday, January 16, 2024. (Gold stars *always* awarded to early birds!)

JANUARY LECTIONARY READINGS

JANUARY 1 – NEW YEAR’S DAY

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13
Psalm 8
Revelation 21:1-6a
Matthew 25:31-36

JANUARY 6 – EPIPHANY

Isaiah 60:1-6
Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14
Ephesians 3:1-12
Matthew 2:1-12

JANUARY 7 – BAPTISM OF CHRIST

Genesis 1:1-5
Psalm 29
Acts 19:1-7
Mark 1:4-11

JANUARY 14 – 2ND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

1 Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20)
Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18
1 Corinthians 6:12-20
John 1:43-51

JANUARY 21 – 3RD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Jonah 3:1-5, 10
Psalm 62:5-12
1 Corinthians 7:29-31
Mark 1:14-20

JANUARY 28 – 4TH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Deuteronomy 18:15-20
Psalm 111
1 Corinthians 8:1-13
Mark 1:21-28



The Adult Forum meets Sunday mornings at **8:15** in the Parlor. **Please note the new time.** Everyone is welcome.

DEACONS

- January 7 - Rev. Keith Bowie
- January 14 - Rev. Keith Bowie
- January 21 - Rev. Dr. David Henry
- January 28 - Rev. Keith Bowie

January Deacon: Anne Bancroft

What JOY we have received in our celebration of the Birth of our Lord and Savior! I love the holidays, the build-up and participating in all the special events. I have so many wonderful memories and I just can't seem to recreate the past. And then I realize that I can't do that because only my memories are larger than life, and I had a much smaller family than my parents did. Times have changed and priorities have changed. But most importantly, my belief and understanding of our Lord and Savior has only increased over the years and I do believe that he is a powerful guide in how I operate and in the choices that I make daily. Sometimes we get in the "dumps" and think we cannot move forward, but thank goodness for Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and God, Most High, to remind us that we are not alone, and we can do anything with their help. We will make it through somehow. Please remember to pray for our church and community.



January 6 is EPIPHANY - It is a special date for Christians when we celebrate a star leading the Magi (AKA the Three kings or the Wise Men) to the baby Jesus. 'Epiphany' comes from the Greek word meaning 'to reveal', as it is when the baby Jesus was revealed to the world.



Prayer Calendar names

As we attempt to pray for our entire church family over the course of a year, the Deacons ask that you please include these names in your daily prayers during January:

- Bonnie & Tim Carter
- Juanita Higgins
- Alice King
- Mark Remick
- Sue & Ken Farkas
- Mark Berry
- Nancy Johnston
- Leah Remick
- Evan Bedard

Thank you to everyone who makes our feeding ministry a success.

JANUARY 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 New Year's Day OFFICE CLOSED	2	3 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	4 9 am Bulletin Deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir	5 OFFICE CLOSED	6 Epiphany
7 White 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	8 OFFICE CLOSED	9	10 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	11 9 am Bulletin Deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir	12 OFFICE CLOSED	13
14 Green 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Deacons 11:30 am Christian Ed	15 OFFICE CLOSED	16	17 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	18 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir 7 pm Trustees	19 OFFICE CLOSED	20
21 Green 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Missions	22 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities 6:30 pm Council	23	24 9 am Steeple deadline 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	25 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir	26 OFFICE CLOSED	27
28 Green 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11 am Annual Meeting	29 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	30	31 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out			

The Work of Christmas Begins

*When the carols have been stilled,
 When the star-topped tree is taken down,
 When family and friends are gone home,
 When we are back to our schedules
 The work of Christmas begins:*

*To welcome the refugee,
 To heal a broken planet,
 To feed the hungry,
 To build bridges of trust, not walls of fear,
 To share our gifts,
 To seek justice and peace for all people,
 To bring Christ's light to the world.*

by Michael Dougherty, a variation on Howard Thurman's 'When the Song of the Angels is Stilled'

Our purpose,
First Congregational Church, UCC, Ellsworth, Maine:
To embrace the life, ministry and teachings of Jesus Christ
In meaningful and dynamic ways through
creative worship,
supportive fellowship,
compassionate outreach, and
stimulating Christian education for all ages;
To be a faithful community which, led by the Holy Spirit,
expresses hospitality,
nurtures spiritual growth, and
promotes a deep sense of belonging;
To strive to build on commonalities while seeking to
understand, accept, and
celebrate our differences;
To stand as a beacon of hope in a hurting and troubled world by
sharing the Good News of the Gospel, and
practicing God's love as embodied by Jesus Christ.
We welcome all to walk with us on the journey of faith.
As adopted by the Congregation at its Annual Meeting – January 22, 2012



First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
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